Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 03461 271233Z

44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CU-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCCT-01 EB-07 OMB-01

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 /098 W

R 271156Z NOV 74 FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7741 INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS USMISSION USUN AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UN, UNESCO, XF, UY

SUBJ: URUGUAY PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION TO UNESCO VOTE ON ISRAEL AND TO OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION MOVES

PARIS FOR NESCO

REF: MVD 3434

1. SUMMARY: URUGUAYAN PUBLIC, INSOFAR AS KNOWN, AND PRESS REACTION TO THE UNESCO DECISION TO EXCLUDE ISRAEL FROM ITS REGIONAL PROGRAMS HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY CRITICAL. THE NATION'S MOST WIDELY READ DAILY COMMENTED EDITORIALLY, TYING TOGETHER THE UNESCO DECISION, THE QUITO MFM AND THE UN VOTE ON THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATUN (PLO) AND CONCLUDING THAT BAD MOVES ON EVERY SIDE MAY SIGNAL THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE GOU, THE UNESCO DECISION COINCIDED WITH A VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 MONTEV 03461 271233Z

BY FOREIGN MINISTER BLANCO WHO APPARENTLY WAS TRYING

TO OBTAIN OIL AND/OR OTHER ASSISTANCE FROM THE ARABS, PUTTING THE ADMINISTRATION SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND ECONOMIC NEEDS.

2. UNESCO'S ELIMINATION OF ISRAEL FROM REGIONAL PROGRAMS HAS BROUGHT A WAVE OF HEATED PROTEST IN URUGUAY. THE PRESS OF NOVEMBER 23 CARRIED THE TEXT OF A CABLE OF PROTEST SENT TO THE UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL BY A GROUP OF DISTINGUISHED URUGUAYAN SCHOLARS AND SCIENTISTS, INCLUDING THREE FORMER FOREIGN MINISTERS, FORMER MEMBERS OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FORMER URUGUAYAN DELEGATES TO THE UN. THE CABLE TERMED UNESCO'S ACTION A FLAGRANT VIOLATON OF THE "OBJECTIVES, CONSTITUTION AND SPIRIT OF UNESCO" AND A "PERVERSION OF THE IDEALS OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD".

3. THE MONTEVIDEO PRESS PICKED UP THE THEME WITH AT LEAST ONE OF THE THREE MAJOR MONTEVIDEOH BDAILIES

CARRYING EDITORIALS CRITICAL OF THE UNESCO AND/OR PLO DECISIONS EVERY DAY SINCE. EL PAIS, THE NATON'S MOST WIDELY READ DAILY. ON NOVEMBER 25 AND 26, WENT BEYOND THE UNESCO VOTE TO COMMENT ON WHAT IT TERMED "THE CRISIS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS". IT EDITORS CRITICIZED (1) THE QUITO MFM-FOR HAVING WASTED TIME DISCUSSING CUBA WHILE THE HEMISPHERE GRAPPLIES WITH A GRAVE ECONOMIC CRISIS, (2) UNESCO-FOR HAVING CLOSED THE DOORS TO ISRAEL WHILE THE ARABS WHO SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION CONTINUE TO CAUSE A WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC DISRUPTION WITH THEIR OIL PRICING POLICIES, AND, (3) THE UNGA-FORHAVING RECOGNIZED THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS BROUGHT "EPISODES OF VIOLENCE, DYNAMTING, KIDNAPPING OF HOSTAGES AND BARBAROUS TERRORIST ATTACKS ON ISRAELI TOWNS AND SCHOOLS." EL PAIS COMMENTED EDITORIALLY ON OV 25, "IT IS SAID THAT...INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE APPROACHING THE BEGINNING OF THE END. PARALLELING THE CRISIS OF THE OLD LEAGUE OF NATIONS." IT CONCLUDED, "...THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS WHICH WOULD GIVE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MONTEV 03461 271233Z

4. COMMENT: UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE GOU, THE UNSCO AFFAIR COINCIDED WITH RELEASE OF THE PLO-INSPIRED WIRE SERVICE STORIES TO THE EFFECT THAT FONMIN BLANCO HAD, WHILE IN LEBANON LAST WEEK, EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR THE PLO CAUSE. THAT EPISODE BROUGHT A PROMPT GOU DENIAL OF A CHANGE IN MIDDLE EAST POLICY (SEE REFTEL). THE SUBSEQUENT SPATE OF EDITORIAL ANDOTHER COMMENT

DOES LITTLE TO EASE PRESSURES ON THE GOU WHICH IS TRYING TO WALK THE FENCE BETWEEN STRONGLY FELT PUBLIC OPINION AD IT NE OR SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ARABS WHICH WOULD BRING IT OIL AND/R OIL MONEY.

5. GDS. SIRACUSA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994 Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, UNGA

RESOLUTIONS Control Number: n/a Copy: SINGLE

Draft Date: 27 NOV 1974 Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960 Decaption Note:

Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MONTEV03461
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00

Document Unique ID: 00

Drafter: n/a Enclosure: n/a Executive Order: N/A Errors: N/A

Film Number: D740344-0905 From: MONTEVIDEO Handling Restrictions: n/a

Image Path: ISecure: 1

Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974118/aaaaagel.tel

Line Count: 122 Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

Office: ACTION ARA

Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE Original Handling Restrictions: n/a Original Previous Classification: n/a Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 3

Previous Channel Indicators:

Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a Reference: MVD 3434

Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED Review Authority: boyleja Review Comment: n/a

Review Content Flags: Review Date: 01 MAY 2002 **Review Event:** Review Exemptions: n/a

Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <12 MAR 2003 by boyleja>

Review Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State

EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier: Review Referrals: n/a Review Release Date: n/a Review Release Event: n/a **Review Transfer Date:** Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

Secure: OPEN Status: NATIVE

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TAGS: PFOR, PORG, XF, UY, XK, XM, UN, UNESCO, PLO To: STATE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005